IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph on page 29, beginning at line 3, with the following amended paragraph:

Figures 4 comprises, 4A, 4B, and 4C and is a flow diagram illustrating a second embodiment of the invention in which network congestion is relieved via the mechanisms of rerouting calls and call gapping in the PSTN domain of the peripheral networks that communicate with each other via the central packet network. Rerouting and call gapping are separate and distinct congestion control mechanisms. However, ~~since~~ the NCM merely generates the information needed to carry out the congestion relief mechanism, while the actual mechanisms are carried out by the peripheral networks. Thus, as will become clear from the discussion below, the steps of the NCM process in the central, packet, network are the same for both of the peripheral domain congestion relief mechanisms (rerouting and call gapping). The difference in operation between re-routing and call gapping occurs in the peripheral domain (i.e., what the peripheral networks do with the provided information). They may be utilized entirely separately from each other or in conjunction with each other and/or any of the other congestion control mechanisms discussed herein. For instance, the rerouting in the PSTN domain illustrated by Figure 4 can be utilized as a secondary network congestion relief mechanism if virtual trunk group resizing (Figure 3) does not yield the necessary congestion relief, e.g., does not bring the amount of call blocking, b_i, below the call blocking threshold T. Rerouting and call gapping are illustrated in conjunction with each other in Figure 4 simply because much of the processing for both mechanisms is similar. Figure 4 illustrates a level-1 embodiment in which the information is collected and congestion relief mechanisms are identified for execution by other network elements. The corresponding level-O embodiment should be apparent therefrom.

Please replace the paragraph on page 32, beginning at line 23, with the following amended paragraph:

If list L2 is not empty, i.e., if there are alternate source gateways from which calls from the relevant peripheral network can be routed to the destination gateway node, then the first potential source gateway on list L2 is removed from the list (step 431). In step 433, the path from that gateway to the destination gateway of the current VTG is examined to determine its PCR using equation (4). In decision step 435, if the path can accommodate a VTG having the PCR calculated in step 425, flow proceeds to step 437 where the necessary information, including the identity of the alternate source gateway node, the identity of VTG_i, the PCR of the new path and the fraction of calls from VTG_i that should be rerouted in the PSTN domain (D_i/M_i) is forwarded to the PSTN network for implementation. That PSTN network should then reroute the fraction D_i/M_i of calls through the identified alternate source gateway and/or institute call gapping based on the fraction D_i/M_i. As discussed above, how this data is used by the peripheral network will differ depending on whether it will perform call gapping or rerouting. For instance, if the peripheral network performs only call gapping, but no rerouting, then the alternate gateway information is not used by the peripheral network.